Lapses

by ClothedCortana

Summary: The greatest love stories are usually tragedies...

1. The Dream

-The Dream-

The cyro-tube opened with a hiss. The figure inside began to stir,
moving out of it slowly. It stopped at the pedestal facing the tube.
Strange, he remembered something being there before he took an
ice-nap. A hologram, blue in color. Where was it? The pedestal itself
was unlit. This was also strange, wasn't it blue too? Like the
hologram? He ignored this and instead removed a small chip from the
stand. He analyzed the surface of it. The chip was wrong also.
Thinking back, he recalled the chip having a bright blue glow. The
one he held in his hand had a soft, menacing red color. Warily, he
slipped the chip into the slot on the back of his helmet. At first,
nothing happened. Then, out of nowhere, a loud piercing screetch rang
through the helmet's COM speakers. A sharp pain cascaded through his
body, dropping him to the ground. He fumbled his fingers around the
around the slot, removing the chip, and slinging it across the floor.
He kneeled on the ground, panting as the pain subsided, but the noise
created a ringing in his ears. Using the pedestal, he brought himself
to a standing position as the dark reality set in. That hologram that
used to stand on that pedestal, that AI, his friend and companion,
wasn't in the chip. She was...gone. The sudden feeling of loneliness
hit him like a ton of bricks. He already missed her.
>A sudden warm feeling formed on his cheek, slowing dropping to his
bottom of his visor. It felt so foreign, actually tearing up to these
feelings. She meant that much...<p>

He missed her voice the most though. That smooth, sharp, beautiful
voice. Whether it was insulting him, or reassuring him, or even
flirting with him, he loved her voice. Just to hear it one last time,
what he would give...

"John?"

He could still hear it, clear as day.

"John, wake up."

Maybe a little too clear.

"CHIEF."

"...huh?"

[FRI: WEEK 1: DAY 1 (DAWN)]
>To be continued...<p>

    2. FRI WEEK 1: DAY 1 (DAWN)

FRI. WEEK 1: DAY 1 (DAWN)

"Nice of you to return to the land of the living, Chief!" The AI
laughed as John rubbed his eyes to clear his sleepy appearance. "How
long was I out?" He asked yawning. "Only an hour." Cortana noted,
"But, you were out like a light!" John sat back in his chair
breathing a sigh of relief. That was all a dream. Cortana was still
here, right beside him. Well, for now at leastâ€¦
>As he gazed over at her avatar, the signs of impending rampancy were
becoming clear as day. Her "skin", once a bright electric blue, was
now a fading red. Her eyes were a dull maroon. The symbols covering
her were becoming scratched and faded. Her voice was beginning to
crack and distort. It was becoming hard to recognize her.<p>

"You look nervous."

John huffed at her, "I'm not nervous, why would I be?" Cortana
smiled, "You're wearing that helmet anymore, Chief. I can read you
like a children's book." He sighed and lay back in his chair. She was
right, without his helmet everyone could tell what he was thinking.
Every eye twitch, lip curl, brow raised held some type of emotion. No
one, not even her, was supposed to see that.
>"How long 'till they call you back?" Cortana crossed her arms as a
speckle of data dashed across her pupils. "At least 30 more minutes."
John stretched his arms forward. "How long does something like this
take?" She growled at him softly, "Stop being so impatient. They have
to make sure all fail safes are in place, just in case." John raised
an eyebrow, "In case what exactly?" Cortana gave him a sad look,
"Well, in case, I can't get through. In caseâ€¦" She trailed off, her
voice distorting with the next sentence, "I-I'm t-t-too brok-kenâ€¦"
She sighed as she sat down on the edge of the pedestal, and looked up
at John. "What if it doesn't work, Chief? What if I stay in this form
'till go absolutely nuts orâ€¦the UNSC shuts me down?" John shook his
head, "I won't let that happen." Cortana scoffed, "Which part? The
"shut down" part, or the "nuts" part?" He just nodded in
response.
Minutes of silence passed between the two in the waiting
room. They watched as doctors, scientists, civilians and soldiers
went in and out of the double doors on the far side of the room. John
gulped softly as he gazed at the opening and closing of them. Any
minute now, Cortana would be called back to the rooms beyond the
threshold. She would either come back in the form that she always
wished for, or not at all. He hoped for the first option, God he

hoped for the first option. Because if it was the latter of the two...
>The thought made him shudder. John starting tapping his right foot rapidly, his new found nervousness returning with a vengeance. Cortana looked over at him, a half-smirk on her face. "Getting fidgety, aren't we?" John ignored her remark for a moment, long enough to think of a lie. "Just...don't like all these people staring." That will work. But as John looked around, he realized he wasn't really lying. People were staring, no, leering at him from across the room. Cortana noticed as well, "Well, you ARE the savior of the human race, John. You don't exactly blend in. You should take the staring as a compliment on how amazing you truly are." John sighed, he wasn't a hero or a savior (AN: FORGET WHAT YOU KNOW~) he was just doing his duty(AN: A "Hero's Duty" Last one, I swear.) like any other marine, ODST, or even Spartan(of any mark) would do. Why was he getting all this praise and admiration? John looked over at all the staring veterans. The way he was staring, sort of made John shiver. It wasn't a stare of admiration, it was a stare of...desire. "Wait," John thought, "He's not staring at me directly, what does he desire so mu-" John growled at the realization. "Pervert." He said aloud. Cortana glanced over at him, "Hm? Did you say something, Chief?" She looked over at the same veteran. The young man jumped when their eyes met. She chuckled as she looked back at John, "Turns out he wasn't staring at me, huh?" John growled in response, "I'd prefer if they were staring at me. Perverts." Cortana laughed loudly, "Awww, poor Chief. I can't help that i'm basically naked. I was born like this after all." John shook his finger at her, "Wrong. You <em>choose <em>to be like that." She sneered at him, "Oh? I don't hear you complaining." She winked and giggled slightly. He just stared at her, a confused look plastered on his face.
>"Say, Chief?"<br>"Hmm?"
>Cortana dropped her shoulders, "There's, uh, something I need to tell you, since this is kind of a life or death situation..." When Cortana said "life or death", a shiver went down John's spine and he felt a little sick to his stomach.
He nodded, "Go ahead, tell me."

>"Do you-?" BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!
Cortana was interrupted by a sharp noise emitting from the pedestal. John sighed, "They're ready for you..." He reached over to remove her chip.
>"Wait, Chief! Let me finish!"
John got on his knees to face her. He smiled for the first time that day. "Tell me all about it when you get back." Cortana shook her head rapidly, her voice starting to crack as she continued to protest, "N-no! I might not C-c-come back! I n-need to-" She trailed off, getting lost in his reassuring stare. "You will." He stated, not a smidge of doubt in his tone. "I promise." Cortana just gazed at him, then nodded. "Okay John. I believe you." She smiled at him, "I'm kind of excited. Is it too soon to feel like this?" He chuckled softly, "Not soon enough." He moved his hand to remove the chip.
>"And Cortana?"<br>"Yeah?"
>"...Good luck."<p>

"We've tried everything John. She's...not coming back..."
>"What the hell is that supposed to mean?! She's "not coming back"? Where'd she go?"<br>"Calm down and let me explain. We started the transfer, and everything was going fine until,...we waited and she didn't make it to the other side. She was probably too weak and fizzled away before she got to the body."
>"We're so sorry..."
"Sorry-? Do you think sorry is going to help?! Find her!"

>"John, she's lost in the data stream! There's no way to find her even if we had an AI to scour after her."
"...You told me that the transfer had a 99.9% success rate, that you've done this same procedure with other Smart AIs and it worked. How did it fail?!"

>"We were the .1%. There's nothing we can do..."
"It's-just-not-FAIR!"
>"John, what are you doing?! Let him go! YOU'RE KILLING HIM! PUT HIM DOWN! JOHN!
"SOMEONE GET SECURITY NOW!"

"...John?"

John awoke abruptly, groggy from the nightmare. He waited for his eyes to refocus.
>"Is your name 'John', sir?"
When his vision cleared, he saw a young girl standing in front of him, dressed in scrubs. Her eyes were hazel, with brown hair that John guessed she tried to dye blonde but failed miserably. It instead looked like a mess of brown and light yellow. "Probably a nurse." He told himself. John nodded, "Yes, and you are?" He spoke in a low, gruff voice that she instantly recognized. She jumped back slightly in surprise, "M-my name's Annette. My friends call me An-Annie. You're J-J-John 117, aren't you?" John grabbed his sleeve on the green jacket he was wearing. In big, black, bold lettering was the numbers "117", clear as day. "So much for being incognito..." He thought, then nodded reluctantly. "Did you wake me for a reason, ma'am?" Annette gulped and nodded, "Y-yes sir! I was told to tell you that the transfer is done." John jumped from his chair, half-panicked, half excited, "Is everything okay?! Is she alright?" Annette hid behind her clipboard, "Yes-! Everything's fine-! She'll be out when they get her ready!" She stepped back, "Uh, I think I hear the doctor calling me backi'mprettysureit'surgent! Sorrygottago! Bye, John! GAH-! I mean, bye sir!" Annie ran away, back through the double doors, startling some patrons near them. John stared at the doors, dumbfounded.

>"What a strange girl...".
Minutes later, the double doors opened with a _swish_. John glanced at it, but then did a double take. Was that _her_? Standing at the door was an older woman with short gray hair and light blue beady eyes, wearing a white lab coat. There was a younger woman next to her. She looked to be in her mid-20's-early 30's. She had dark-brown hair and what looked to be purple and blue streaks on the tips of their strands. John had no idea who she was until she opened her bright electric blue eyes. Only one woman could possess those. He didn't need an invitation, he didn't care that everyone in that waiting room was watching. He dashed over to where she was, and wrapped his arms around her tightly. "It finally happened..." She said softly, "It finally happened, John..." Cortana looked up at him with tears in her eyes. John smiled down on her her, using his thumb to wipe a tear away. She blinked, "I'm not sad, why, why am I crying?" He leaned down to whisper, "You can cry when you're happy too, when you're really, really happy." She giggled softly, then wrapped her arms around him tightly. The two stood there for a minute in each other's embrace, until Cortana opened her eyes and looked around.
>"Um, John?"
John looked to his left, then to his right. EVERYONE in that waiting room was staring at them with wide eyes. "Oh..."

>"Well, what are you waiting for? Kiss her!"
John looked over to see the same pervert vet from before, "What?"
>"You know you want to! Do it!"
Other patrons joined in.

>"Kiss her! C'mon!"<br>"What are you, chicken? Do it!"
>"Kiss her, Chief!"
Soon enough, the waiting room was full of
chanters saying, "Kiss her! Kiss her!" Even doctors and nurses were
joining in including the girl from earlier, Annette.
>John looked around, "They're not going to stop until I do it, are
they?" Cortana smirked, "I assume not." John gulped, he didn't want
to do this, not here. Maybe on a moonlit night, with no one else
around except them, just not here. "Okay, close your eyes." She
complied, leaning forward a small bit, her heart racing, her cheeks
tingling and red. She had waited so long to-
smeck!
>"On the cheek, really John?"
The crowd was less satisfied than
before. They booed him saying, "Give her a REAL kiss!" John sighed in
annoyance, "What do you people want from me?" He thought, then looked
down at Cortana, "A real kiss? That's not a real kiss?" She frowned,
"No, John. In what universe is that a real kiss?" He rolled his eyes,
"Then what is-MMPPPH!"
>For a moment, John thought the world had stopped. He couldn't hear
the crowd cheering anymore. All he could see was black. But, he had
this warm feeling all over him. A strange euphoric feeling.
When
Cortana pulled away, he felt dizzy as he heard the crowd cheering.
She looked up at him, "That's a real kiss." He smiled, nervously,
"Yeah, it was..." She pulled herself closer, laying her head on his
chest, listening to his racing heart. He wrapped his arms around her.

>"Today is <em>Day One<em> of our new life together."

FRI: DAY 1:WEEK 1 (DUSK)
><em>To be continued...<em>

End
file.